

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. PRYOR. Therefore, pursuant to rule VI of the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that I might be excused from further business of the Senate on this day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

I thank my very good friend, Senator LEAHY, from Vermont.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I applaud the distinguished Senator from Arkansas for his comments about our good friend's mother. I know, also, the trip he takes to Arkansas is not one of joy. But we wish him Godspeed on his trip, and safe home.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I compliment Senator MCCONNELL for the job he has done in putting this bill together. Having served for 6 years as chairman of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, and maybe for a dozen or more years before that as a member of the committee, I know how difficult it is to put this bill together. He and I, and our staffs, have worked closely on this. I think we have the makings of a bill the President can sign.

We have a time, as we know, when many of our fellow Senators, both Republicans and Democrats, favor cutting foreign aid even further than it has already been cut in recent years. Senator MCCONNELL has defended the need for foreign aid to protect U.S. interests around the world. I joined him in that. But, despite efforts by both of us to obtain a higher budget allocation for foreign operations, foreign operations which, like defense, is uniquely the responsibility of a Federal Government, our budget has been slashed. Today we see the consequences.

This bill represents nearly a \$1.2 billion cut below the fiscal 1995 level; a \$2.4 billion cut below the President's fiscal year 1996 request.

Had I written this bill this year I might have done some things differently. But neither Senator MCCONNELL nor I could have avoided serious damage because the money simply is not there. We ought to stop, and think, as a country. If we continue down this path in a very few years the United States, which today is the only superpower in the world, will have no money to carry out foreign policy other than to fight wars. We do not have the kind of money to stop a problem from happening. Yet we can come in with billions after the problem occurs, to fight a war.

There is not going to be money for peacekeeping, none for supporting economic development in countries that hold great promise for American exports. The jobs that we create here in the United States, preparing items for exports—those exports are going more to the developing world than to the developed world. Our increase in exports is to the developing world but we are not going to have money to support economic development of those parts of the world.

We will end up abandoning the World Bank, the United Nations. Then we will stand back and watch Japan and our other allies fill the void. And they will, because they are anxious to do so, because they know the long-term economic and political benefits are enormous.

We would be terribly shortsighted now, at the end of the cold war, when the United States stands as the economic and military giant of the world, if we just gave away our preeminence by nickel and diming the programs that might sustain it.

I do want to mention a couple of provisions of the bill which I believe stand between us and the President's signature. I have heard from several Senators about these provisions, including the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, Senator BYRD, who mentioned them at the committee markup.

One is the provision relating to Korea. I am sympathetic to the chairman's goals, but I am told by the administration as a practical matter this would prevent the United States from contributing to KEDO. If we want this bill to get signed, we are going to have to substantially modify this provision. I am told our staffs are already making progress on them.

Another is the provision which would cut off all aid to Russia if it proceeds to the sale of nuclear equipment to Iran. On the merits, I am in complete agreement with this. I think of Iran as a pariah nation fostering terrorism, showing complete disregard for human rights, and certainly unwilling to carry out its obligations as a member of the world community. But I also want to be sure that either here or in conference we modify this provision so we do not jeopardize a program very much in our national interest.

And, finally, I note that the subcommittee voted 8 to 5 for my amendment to strike restrictive House language on funding for international population programs. I have to assume there is going to be an amendment to restore that language here on the floor, but I emphasize this bill continues the prohibition of funding for abortion that we have had for years. It also prohibits the use of any United States funds in China. Further restrictions along the lines of what the House has proposed could invite a veto.

Now, this bill should not take a lot of the Senate's time unless people want to make debating points rather than

policy points. We have already had an opportunity to debate the State Department authorization bill when many of the foreign policy issues were discussed. There is no reason to repeat that episode in this bill. I hope that we will dispose of any amendments and dispose of them quickly if amendments come up that basically just ask us to retread the ground we have already walked on in this session.

As I said, I will put a longer statement in the RECORD, but I do want to say how much I appreciate the bipartisan way Senator MCCONNELL and his staff approached this process. I think it bodes well to get this on to the President's desk.

Mr. President, despite Senator MCCONNELL's and my best efforts, this bill poses major challenges for the United States as the world's only superpower. At a time when the global threats to our security are too numerous to mention, funding to combat those threats is increased in only one area, export assistance, and even there it falls short of the President's request.

In other areas it makes unprecedented cuts in programs that seek to fight poverty, promote economic growth, reduce population growth rates, stop the spread of infectious diseases, care for growing numbers of destitute refugees, combat ocean pollution, the destruction of biodiversity and other environmental degradation, deter the proliferation of conventional and nuclear weapons, and countless other problems that directly threaten every American.

Again, this is despite the considerable efforts Senator MCCONNELL and I have made to spread the pain that the cuts in our allocation required.

Let me mention some specific programs, and what we have done.

For the first time, the bill consolidates all development assistance and non-Middle East economic support funds. This means, for example, that the Development Fund for Africa no longer exists in this bill as a separate account, and neither does population. There are no longer separate appropriations for the Inter-American Foundation or the African Development Foundation.

Frankly, this concerns me. The Development Fund for Africa has existed for almost a decade, and a population account since 1967. The DFA was created, in large part, to protect this extraordinarily vulnerable, poorest region in the world, and it has served its purpose well. We need to be sure that whatever we end up with in conference adequately protects Africa in the future.

Having said that, in order to minimize the possibility that any of these accounts or programs are disproportionately hurt when cuts are made, at my request Senator MCCONNELL agreed to include a provision that requires that the cuts be made on a proportional basis, reflecting each program's current percentage of the fiscal year